

Heritage Plan for Carnegie Library Building, Herne Hill



Introduction

The Grade 2 listed Carnegie Library Building in Herne Hill Road, opened in 1906, is one of the most distinguished buildings in Lambeth. It is also a building of great importance to the people of Herne Hill having served as a library and meeting place for more than 100 years.

The changing nature of public library provision now means that the Lambeth Library Service no longer requires use of the entire building for its present level of service and there is a great deal of space that could be used for other purposes. Lambeth Council has already adapted the basement for use as a gym.

Although the building has had basic maintenance and repair from Lambeth Council, much of its structure and servicing needs renewal. A professional study by consultants appointed by the Carnegie Project Group (precursor to the Community Trust) detailed this work, which was then (2016) estimated to cost several millions of pounds.

It was the likely cost of conserving and refurbishing the building that led Lambeth Council to invite the community to take ownership under the Community Asset Transfer legislation and the Carnegie Community Trust was selected, from a competition, to be the body to receive the building. Until the building is transferred from Lambeth the Community Trust has a renewable licence to use the space not occupied by the library and gym.

The Community Trust intends that the building be used to the full, and where necessary refurbished and repurposed to accommodate not only the library and gym but also a range of other community, educational and cultural uses appropriate to a Community Hub. Accordingly, we wish to set out the principles that will guide use of the building and any future building works that affect the fabric.

Heritage Plan

This Heritage Plan has been developed in 2020 by Carnegie Community Trust Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CCT) as a statement of our intention to work with others to conserve and care for the Carnegie Library building as a heritage asset, throughout its development and use as a Community Hub. The Plan should be read in conjunction with the detailed Conservation Statement written in 2014 by Kathryn Sather and Associates.

<https://carnegiehernehill.org.uk/project-documents/> (March, 2014)

The Trust is committed to the protection and conservation of the heritage building and surrounding gardens.

In recent years, local groups have made strong statements in support of Carnegie Library and have moved to resist possible closure or change of use entailing loss of the library service. Between 2016 and 2018, the building was closed for 2 years whilst a gym was built in the basement in partnership between Lambeth Council and Greenwich Leisure Ltd. In March 2018, the building was partially reopened, initially with only the library service and gym, and since May 2019 the surrounding rooms have been licensed for use by CCT to develop as a Community Hub. The Trust is committed to look after the building as it develops, both as licence holders, and subsequently as lease holders.

1. Carnegie Community Trust

The Carnegie Community Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in October 2015 for the following purposes:

“The objects of the charity are:

- (1) to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the statutory authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants;
- (2) to establish, or secure the establishment of, a Community Hub and to maintain and manage the same (whether alone or in co-operation with any statutory authority or other person or body) in furtherance of the Objects;
- (3) to conserve for the benefit of the people of Herne Hill and the nation at large the historical and architectural heritage of the Carnegie Library building in Lambeth, and to advance the engagement of the public in the building’s heritage.
- (4) to promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

The CIO shall be non-party in politics and non-sectarian in religion. The area of benefit (“area of benefit”) shall be the district of Herne Hill in London postcodes SE24 and SE5, along with adjoining neighbourhoods.”

To achieve those objects the Trust will operate initially through a Licence and subsequently through a longer term Lease which will represent an asset transfer – transferring the asset to the Community.

The Trust was established using a foundation model CIO and is committed to ensure that the Community Hub is managed by the community for the community. Currently there are seven Trustees and we are keen to recruit more and further expand the diversity of the group. The Trustees have a responsibility to work with local residents and with Lambeth Council to preserve the heritage of the Carnegie Library building.

2. The Building Heritage

Carnegie Library is one of over 2,000 Carnegie Libraries built around the world in the early 20th century with funding from the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie Herne Hill was built in 1906 and was listed Grade 2 in 1981.

Grade Two Listing

A Grade 2 listed building is defined as a UK building or structure that is "of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve it". Buildings listed on the heritage register are legally protected from being demolished, extended or significantly altered without special permission from the local planning authority. At Carnegie, therefore, no alterations inside or outside can be made without the permission of the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the only official, up to date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England - listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields.

Historic England offers guidance on the sustainable management of the historic environment.

[link](#)

Features that contribute to the listing and to the significance of Carnegie Herne Hill include:

1. Picturesque building combining classical framework and Tudor-like large mullioned and transomed windows
2. Formal and symmetrical architectural composition of character and interest
3. The front is framed in an ionic order with pilasters to windows and free standing columns at angle of end bays
4. Brick elevation with terracotta enrichment and metal windows with leaded lights
5. Attractive original roofscape
6. Perimeter garden
7. Terracotta and brick boundary treatment with post-war railings
8. One storey front range of 7 wide bays with 2 bell cupolas on roof ridge
9. Round arched central entrance in rusticated terracotta panel has Ionic columns supporting open pediment with draped cartouche bearing escutcheons.
10. Ornate vestibule with stained glass, decorative features and commemorative plaques
11. Largely symmetrical library layout
12. Spacious top-lit library spaces with historic flooring, plasterwork and other features
13. Principal staircase with ornate ironwork
14. Secondary first floor library accommodation retaining historic layout and feature
15. Residential accommodation built originally for librarian

List entry number: 1185521

[link](#)

The Conservation Statement (Kathryn Sather, 2014) assessed the significance of the various spaces and elements which comprise the building.

Significant heritage features noted in the Conservation Statement include:

- The grand internal public space of the principal ground floor room, with its distinctive ornate interconnecting windows and doors, domed and monopitch rooflights, and Corinthian columns
- The terracotta elements to the exterior of the building, including Ionic columns, window mullions, copings, and rusticated terracotta to main entrance
- Stained glass roof light and floor mosaic in the entrance lobby
- Decorated, moulded dado rails
- Herringbone parquet floors throughout

3. The Cultural Heritage

In making the endowment of £12,500 to Lambeth Council in 1902 to complete the building of Carnegie Library Andrew Carnegie expressed his wish to enhance the welfare and education of the people of Herne Hill. The Trust regards this part of the heritage as equally important. The Heritage Lottery Fund who have funded our development work, strongly encourage groups to expand local knowledge of the cultural heritage of their communities and to foster a continuing understanding of the cultural legacy. This Heritage Plan seeks to further that aim.

4. The Garden at Carnegie

The Library was built with a surrounding Edwardian garden including trees, shrubs, paths, lawns and small circular flower beds shown on the original plans.

When excavation for the gym was carried out in 2016 some parts of the garden were particularly badly damaged. The rear garden, reduced in size by the gym heat extraction equipment, was restored in part by Lambeth following the works and local people have worked hard as volunteers since 2019 to clear and tidy the border gardens as far as possible.

Funding is particularly required to restore the most damaged border garden. A local garden designer has very generously donated her time to draw up plans for these sections of the border gardens, particularly those parts facing Ferndene Road. A plan of the garden from 1906 has been located in the Lambeth archives, showing that it should be possible to restore a considerable amount of the Edwardian heritage whilst ensuring sustainability and accessibility. Consultation on the restoration plans is taking place during 2020, alongside consultation on this Heritage Plan.

See web post 1st April 2020 www.carnegiecommunitytrust.org.uk

5. The Community Hub

The Community Hub will generate income to help maintain the Carnegie Library Building and its heritage. Our vision is that the Community Hub will be a focal point in the community, through which all sections of our diverse community are able to work together to meet the widest possible range of needs of the community. Herne Hill is a mixed area, both socially and economically, sitting between large estates at Loughborough Junction and Dulwich Village. It is important to us and to the local authority that the Hub reaches all communities. Over time we want to ensure that the building is genuinely "owned and managed" by the community.

The Community Hub will enable and encourage community events.

In addition there will be:

- A range of rooms for hire and for activities and events such as
 - Celebrations
 - Meetings
 - Advice sessions
 - Classes including physical activities
 - Entertainments
- An Enterprise Centre on the first floor where local entrepreneurs and others can hire a desk. This facility is now available for individual hires.
- A community Café for which we have agreed the design, secured part funding and are seeking further funding
- The Library managed by Lambeth Library Service

6. Heritage interpretation programme

To date we have

- provided Heritage Protection Training to a group of volunteers
- hosted an Exhibition on Herne Hill in the First World War
- hosted an exhibition and book launch on John Ruskin
- provided information about the African Caribbean Cricket Association Club in Herne Hill

We are keen to work with Lambeth Archives and other local organisations and enthusiasts towards recording and preserving our local heritage.

7. How we will protect and manage the heritage – our Heritage Principles

- We will follow Heritage Guidance on all maintenance and care for the Building
- We will consult on any proposed changes to the interior or exterior of the Building

- We will consult on the Heritage Plan with the community, Lambeth Council Conservation lead, Butler Hegarty Architects (specialist conservation architects), and with Carnegie UK
- We will keep the Heritage Plan under review annually, supported by the Conservation Statement, and any relevant condition or other reports
- We will provide training for Volunteers in Heritage Protection and Management
- We will encourage discovery about and care for our local heritage through events, activities and exhibitions
- We will maintain and regularly review a Risk Register for the conservation of the building and key projects and we will keep the preservation of the building and the heritage regularly on our agendas
- We will ensure that the leases between Lambeth Council, GLL and CCT are clear about roles and responsibilities for the heritage.

Specific Principles in respect of any changes to the Building:

- Future building work to the Building should respect and take guidance from the Conservation Statement undertaken in 2014 by Katherine Sather Associates and since adopted by the Community Trust, which identifies and ranks in importance the key architectural and heritage features of the building.
- The exterior of the Building should be conserved and repaired in materials to match the existing, with no alteration to the design or structure, other than necessary alterations in line with legislation and heritage best practice to improve disability access.
- Replacement or upgrading of services, such as lifts, and utilities supply lines, should not damage the internal fabric and as far as is practicable be concealed.
- Architectural features such as tiles, glazing, ironwork, flooring and plasterwork should be conserved and retained.
- New interventions, such as lighting, should respect the original character of the Building, particularly on the ground floor, and be appropriate and discreet.
- Noise insulation materials, if needed, should as far as possible be in harmony with the Building and not alter its original design.
- Where possible any existing building interventions that are considered inappropriate or damaging to the design and character of the Building, such as non-matching windows, should be removed. Replacements should match the original building design and materials.
- Where irreversible changes to the listed building are necessary, historic building recording will be undertaken and the results deposited in the public archive (i.e. the Historic Environment Record).
- The external perimeter wall should be repaired and materials to match the original, particularly using professionally applied mortars to match the original, and replacement ironwork should match the original.
- The surrounding grounds and rear garden should be retained and be subject to a quality design to guide appropriate new planting.
- Any external lighting or illumination should be subject to a professional study to ensure that it is appropriate for the Building and does not cause nuisance to neighbouring properties.

8. Risk Register for the Building

We perceive a number of physical risks for the heritage Building which are listed below with our proposals for mitigating them.

Risk 1

- Damage from weather to fabric of the Building causing both external and internal deterioration.

Mitigation

- CCT will
 - remain alert to physical risk to the Building and ensure inspection following severe weather episodes
 - plan regular seasonal maintenance when we hold a lease
 - ensure inspections are recorded
 - identify weak points where possible
 - prioritise repair to the fabric
 - seek to ensure that appropriate and suitably skilled and experienced workers are employed
 - keep details of relevant contractors for various types of repair - gutters, roof, exterior walls
 - ensure that signs, notices, adverts are not posted on the building itself

Risk 2

- The condition of the roof - the roof lights over the central room, and the copper roof and gutters have been leaking in places and have been inadequately repaired by a series of temporary measures.

Mitigation

- The roof will inevitably require repair and upgrading.
 - This work should be carried out along the best conservation principles in a careful and sensitive manner without detriment to the historic Building, in accordance with the Conservation Statement and generally in line with best guidance in BS 7913:2013 and relevant conservation guidance.

Risk 3

- Damage to interior features by inappropriate use of rooms.

Mitigation

- The Trustees will ensure that users are aware of constraints and together we will
 - not put up pictures or other items on the walls such that the interior fabric is damaged.
 - not spill harmful substances on the floors
 - not leave windows open inappropriately
 - maintain the Building at a reasonable temperature also to reduce carbon
 - not leave the Building in a condition likely to cause degradation
 - clean the Building regularly

Risk 4

- The Building ceases to be financially viable.

Mitigation

- We will operate efficiently and effectively as a business seeking to maintain a viable income
- We will work with the Community towards maximum use of the building as a Community Hub generating income to preserve the building
- We will encourage the widest possible range of local people and groups to use the building as their Community Hub
- We will invite donors to sponsor the heritage aspects of the Building
- We will work closely with Lambeth Council and with Heritage Bodies to ensure that there is always transparency about the financial viability